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27. Trends can be identified within both the West and the Bloc which might undermine each side's political stability and cohesion. We cannot predict, however, that these trends will have such effects and ~~certainly~~ we cannot say that they would do so within the period of this estimate.

(a) Trends now seem to be running against the West in the under-developed areas. If these trends cannot be arrested, the consequent growth of instability and Communist influence in these areas may eventually have serious effects on the economic stability and pro-Western orientation of Western Europe and Japan.

(b) While there is no reason at this time to predict the Bloc's decay or collapse, the possibility exists of certain changes adverse to its present strength and stability. Internal rigidity may deprive the USSR of that flexibility and vitality which contribute to a political system's survival and growth. Alternatively, the Kremlin may decide to modify and relax its previous policies, only to find that this relaxation adversely affects continuing Soviet economic growth, satellite stability, and Sino-Soviet cohesion. It would be unsafe, however, to assume that the <sup>se</sup> problems <sup>in se</sup> which are ~~inherent~~ inherent in the Soviet system will have reached critical proportions within the next fifteen years. Unless they do, the totalitarian nature of the Soviet system and the Kremlin's pervasive control or influence over its Bloc partners will continue to provide it with many advantages over the less cohesive coalition led by the US.

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